

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Phase IA background research previously undertaken regarding the Church Road improvements project had revealed the presence of several potentially-significant standing historic structures as well as the potential for the presence of historic and possibly prehistoric archaeological resources. The Phase IB research focused on fieldwork and included a survey of two structures, for which Determinations of Eligibility (DOE) forms were prepared, as well as the surface examination and archaeological subsurface investigation of various segments throughout the study area.

The Phase I and II investigations conducted in association with planned improvements along Church Road resulted in the discovery of a significant multi-component archaeological site containing prehistoric archaeological deposits and the remains of a nineteenth century historic farmstead. The survey also involved the evaluation of two standing historic structures, neither of which are being recommended as eligible for nomination, due to their overall lack of architectural integrity which has been compromised by additions and modification to the original structures.

The archaeological site, designated as the Wynnefield Site (7NC-D-219), contains an early to late nineteenth century homestead/farmstead consisting of at least one residential structure, and buried prehistoric materials evidencing multiple prehistoric occupations during the Woodland I period, and potentially during the Contact period ca. A.D. 1700. In terms of prehistoric potential, the predictive models, as they pertain to the particular landforms in the project area and in terms of the setting, indicated a potential for procurement sites with almost no potential for base camps evidencing more substantial and less transient occupation by Native American hunter gatherers.

The content of the Wynnefield Site contradicts the predictive models, in that located archaeological deposits and the assemblage of artifacts recovered in a variety of disturbed and undisturbed contexts, indicate that the site was used as a base camp during some of the periods of occupation. Pit features are usually seen as indicators of permanence within a settlement pattern, and the range of tools discovered at the site indicate a wide range of activities including but not necessarily limited to: 1) the procurement and processing of locally-obtained lithic materials for the manufacture of stone tools, 2) the maintenance of the curated portion of tool kits, 3) the procurement and processing of hunted food resources, and 4) the procurement and processing of plant materials. In addition, the Wynnefield Site also has the potential to provide information on local paleo-environmental conditions and site formation processes.

Significance Evaluation

Based on the data presented above, it is the considered opinion of the investigators that the Wynnefield Site is significant and eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places under the terms of Criterion D, and possibly under the terms of Criterion A. The site contains patterned and undisturbed archaeological deposits with good research potential and a substantial amount of physical integrity. The historic component of the site is also associated with Congressman George Townsend, a prominent citizen of the State of Delaware during the nineteenth century.

Recommendations

Based on the above-summarized data, the following recommendations are presented for the consideration of the project sponsors:

The Wynnefield Site should be avoided, and pro-active measures should be taken to protect the site from destruction and/or encroachment. Pro-active measures are particularly necessary, due to the fact that this portion of New Castle County is rapidly being subsumed by development, and this significant site is under eminent threat of destruction, due to developmental pressure(s).

Failing all efforts at preservation, the Wynnefield Site should be subjected to Data Recovery and the information contained in the site should be retrieved, analyzed, and reported upon, prior to the loss of the data.